Take–Home Law Examinations

Strategies and Common Problems

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ALL examinations require you to prepare and study
  ◦ preparation + consistent effort = ↑ results

You should KNOW your work thoroughly before the exam
A TAKE–HOME exam means

- You have access to the exam from a certain day/time and must submit your answer by a certain day/time.

- There is less time–pressure than a formal exam.

- You can use resources, as in an Open Book exam.

**BUT** this means there is a higher expectation about the quality of your answer.
Preparation for the exam:

- Go over ‘recent’ (<5 years old) **PAST EXAM PAPERS**, if they are available.
  - Older papers (>5 years old) may have different format/content
  - Some units/lecturers make these available through direct links on Moodle
  - All units—through the UNE Library site: [http://www.une.edu.au/library](http://www.une.edu.au/library)
Before the Take-Home exam:

- Prepare early for the exam
- Identify and Review key topics and issues
- Make summaries from your text/s, lecture notes and other relevant resources
- Use a clear system to identify key issues you can use when answering the exam
  - External tags
  - Summary format
  - Contents page
Sample Summary Format 1:

Concept

- 1:
- 2:
- 3:
- 4:
- etc

Supporting Cases, Legislation, Examples, References
### Sample Summary Format 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(e.g.) Intellectual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Law</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key elements</th>
<th>Sub-topic</th>
<th>Sub-topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Cases, Legislation, Examples, References</td>
<td>examples</td>
<td>examples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the TAKE–HOME exam:

Remember:
Take–Home exams are designed to find out about YOU:

◦ what YOU know about the topic
◦ how you APPLY your knowledge of the topic

Not how much you can *find and copy* from a source.

Use the exam time period to think, develop, focus and review YOUR answer
Common Problems (1):

- Too many books to open/read
  - There is not enough time in a Take–Home exam period to start to find and read lots of new material from many different sources
  - Keep it simple and focussed – limit your resources to relevant material.
  - Know your resources, have key issues clearly marked and easy to find.
Common Problems (2):

- Copying extensive sections

You will not receive marks, even if you reference the source correctly.

- Why?
- It is not YOUR answer, but a collection of information from other sources that just fills up the page.
Common Problems (3):

- Referencing in the exam?

What does THIS exam require?

Read instructions clearly:
  - Full AGLC3 referencing?
  - Author/case/source?
  - Basic mention?

Find out **before** the exam and include that level of referencing in your summaries – AVOID PLAGIARISM –
When answering a question (1):

- Identify the general topic area/s
- What is the focus of the question within that topic area/s?
- What am I asked to do?
  - break down the question into its parts

Consider:
1. Instruction words
2. Topic words
3. Any focus/restrictions
When answering a question (2):

- What key terminologies should I include in my answer?

- Is there a case/legislation/example I should include to support *my* answer?
  - State **why** it is relevant to the answer

- Make it easy for the reader (marker) to find your main points
  - **BE specific and obvious**
  - Don’t leave the reader guessing what you are trying to say
  - Don’t assume the reader will make ‘mental leaps’ to connect ideas in your answer – you must TELL the reader the links to prove that you know your content.
When answering a question (3):

Focus on the specific task of the question

- Keep your answer RELEVANT to what the question asks
- Show how your answer is tied to the focus of the question
  - Use key words/terms from the question in your answer
- Don’t fill your answer with everything you can think of or find in your exam resources about the topic – this is called ‘dumping’ information
- ‘Dumping’ tells the reader (marker)
  - that you’re not sure what is important and what is not
  - that you don’t really know your work and how to apply it
  - that you expect the reader to search to find the answer
- Remember – make it easy for the reader/marker to see your correct answer
Take–Home Exam Summary

FOCUS on

Time

- Access the exam paper as soon as it becomes available – ‘Your time starts . . . “now.”’
- Structure, plan and develop your answers using relevant models:
  o e.g. problem-solving or research-style essay

Relevance of Resources

- use resources & apply to your answer
- Tell the marker why it is relevant

Question Specifics

- Identify and answer the specifics of the question – not ‘dumping’ blocks of material about the general topic

Proofread before submission
Other UNE resources:


  - **Subject–specific writing:** LAW
  - **ASO Fact Sheets**: 2 page summaries – *MANY* topics, including exams
    - [http://www.une.edu.au/current-students/resources/academic-skills/fact-sheets](http://www.une.edu.au/current-students/resources/academic-skills/fact-sheets)
  - **Online Study Skills Workshops**: self-directed workshops
    - Learning Strategies (including exams)–Academic Reading–Academic Writing
    - [http://www.une.edu.au/current-students/resources/academic-skills/online-study-skills-workshops](http://www.une.edu.au/current-students/resources/academic-skills/online-study-skills-workshops)
Other UNE resources:

- **Counsellors:**
  - Support to succeed in all aspects of your studies
    

- **Tip Sheets:**
  - Including: Emotional Well-being for Law Students, Relaxation, Procrastination, Dealing with Exam Anxiety, Improving Concentration, Staying Motivated and many more...
  - Scroll through the list at
    
And after this . . .

. . .then this !!!